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ABSTRACT

A model and instrument based on leadership as social control theory (LASC) to assess leadership qualities of high school principals was developed in this study. The LASC model, based on symbolic interactionist and functionalist paradigms, attempts to explain the process by which leaders reduce conflicts between individual and organizational expectations through communication of Organizational expectations to followers. The model is composed of nine leadership dimensions, which are combinations of three leadership orientations and three motivation styles. A pilot survey of 114 Washington State public high school principals to test the instrument for reliability and validity indicates that principals generally prefer to use positive power styles based on reward combines with a direct personal orientation in communicating with teachers. Recommendations are made for application of the LASC model to a study of teachers and qualitative observational research of a variety of school sites. (6 references) (LMI)

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Assessing Principal Leader Qualities: Using a Comprehensive Research Strategy

Abstract

by Thomas D. Gougeon, Ph.D.
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Assessing Principal Leader Qualities: Using a Comprehensive Research Strategy

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This is a report of a leadership study of principals in school systems. Key to the study is the simultaneous consideration of concepts from Structural Functionalist and Symbolic Interactionalist social science paradigms developing an alternative leadership theory. Concepts of power and authority as social control mechanisms and their respective modalities are drawn from the paradigms. These concepts provide the basis for developing the theory and subsequent leadership assessment instrument designed for high school principals. Reliability and validity are discussed suggesting conclusions may be generalized to the national level. Leadership qualities of high school principals are assessed and found to be significantly associated with the following biographical factors listed in order of importance, gender, number of years previous teaching experience, student enrollment, number of previous principalships, and number of certified teachers.

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ASSESSING PRINCIPAL LEADER QUALITIES: USING A COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

The title of this paper asserts that a comprehensive research strategy is reported herein. It is comprehensive because of a three-part process used. The study began with the development of a social control theory from compatible elements of two social science paradigms. The theory was applied to leadership as social control situations. Second, a model of leadership was derived which delineated the theory. Finally, an assessment instrument was developed in one-to-one correspondence to the model.

LEADERSHIP THEORY

In this section, leadership theory involving social control concepts is described. Social control concepts are adapted from those originally introduced by Spady and Mitchell (1977) and later used by Reed, Krysinski, Gougeon, and Armstrong (1987).

Social control is characterized using structural functional and symbolic interactional social science paradigms. Expectation systems and social control styles are identified as two concepts common to both paradigms (Spady and Mitchell, 1977) and became pivotal points for the development of the social control theory. Expectation systems are characteristics of organizations and individual people.

A basic assumption of leadership as social control (LASC) theory is people act and behave according to

expectations held by them. The LASC theory incorporates the expectation systems of individuals and organizations, and the LASC model incorporates leader actions appropriate to different combinations of follower and organizational expectations.

Expectation systems are composed of mutually incompatible pairs of expectations. Following are examples that illustrate several characteristics of expectation systems held by individuals and organizations. The first two expectation pairs characterize the desires of a fictitious individual and the last two expectation pairs characterize the needs of a fictitious organization to which the individual belongs.

Individuals hold expectations toward bonding with other individuals. Bonding expectations are mutually incompatible with expectations to differentiate from others. Thus an "expectation continuum" represents the two expectations with bonding and differentiation at the extremes. For example, individuals may have expectations to be "different and superior" to their peers rather than be "bonded and equal" to them. This example may be illustrated by the figure below where "*" represents the point of tension between the mutually incompatible extremes on the bonding-differentiating continuum. As the point of tension is placed closer to one extreme, the characteristics of that extreme become more dominant and characteristics of the other extreme become less dominant.

Individuals also hold expectations toward environmental stability and change. Stability expectations are mutually incompatible with expectations of change. Thus tensions between expectations of stability and change exist within individuals. The stability-change expectation continuum represents the degree of variability desired by individuals. An example of this is illustrated in the figure below. Here an individual's point of tension between stability and change favours the side of change. In such a case an individual may be characterized as creative and risk taking.

Expectations are manifest in organizations also. One pair of expectations that may be held in tension by an organization may be represented by a continuum is the expectation for maintenance versus production. An organization which typically desires maintenance over production is illustrated in the figure below where the point of tension is to the left of center. While maintenance is a critical function in all organizations, some seek to emphasize productivity concepts over maintenance so that they increase their percentage of the marketplace. On the other hand, if maintenance functions prevailed over production in an organization, it would risk lowering its chances to be competitive.

MAINTENANCE <------*----------> PRODUCTION

Another pair of organizational expectations is the desire for compliance versus involvement of its members. For example, an organization expects member compliance over member involvement. This is illustrated below with the point of tension placed to the left of center. When an organization holds dominant compliance expectations of its members, it expects members to follow rules and procedures rigidly. In this case, the organization may consider quality control vital and require its members to work with meticulous care. Otherwise, organizations may hold involvement expectations more dominant and compliance less dominant. As a result, organizational members would exhibit enthusiasm and intensity over the need for quality control and meticulous care.

Note that organizations frequently expect compliance for some positions such as microprocessor production where meticulous care is required, while expecting involvement for other positions where enthusiasm and intensity are required, such as sales and marketing of microprocessors.

COMPLIANCE <------*----------> INVOLVEMENT

As mentioned before, the LASC theory incorporates the expectation systems of individuals and organizations. Although individual expectation pairs do not correspond precisely with organizational expectation pairs, it is sufficient to state that individuals who expect to excel

above the level of their peers and who desire change will be in conflict with the expectations of an organization which expects high maintenance and compliance of its members. Thus, as illustrated above, the points of tension of the fictitious individual and organization do not align. The non-alignment of expectations is termed a "conflict in expectations".

There frequently exists conflicts in expectations between individuals and the organization. The Social control theory defines actions of the leader in terms of conflict of expectations. Leadership is the process of reducing conflicts in expectations between the organization and its individual members. Next, the Leadership as Social Control model explains how leaders reduce conflicts in expectations between the organization and its members by communicating organizational expectations to followers.

LEADERSHIP MODEL

In general, leaders act as leaders when they align follower expectations and reduce conflict to achieve the organization's mandate for maintenance and goal attainment. They achieve this employing different orientational and motivational situations. Leaders orient themselves with followers in three different ways. They communicate organizational expectations to followers using personal encounter, official task, and functional structure orientations. The leader may use authority, positive power or negative power motivational styles in each orientation.

The model of leadership has nine leadership dimensions which are consequences of three leadership orientations and three styles of motivation. The three leadership orientations, three communication styles, and the resulting nine leadership dimensions will now be described.

Three Leadership Orientations

Leaders orient themselves with followers directly or indirectly. That is, they communicate directly face-to-face or indirectly using physical organizational structures such as memoranda and public address systems, or using symbolic structures such as programs and ceremonies. The choice of orientation leaders make depends upon personal preferences and contextual factors. Leaders may directly orient with followers on a personal level. When leaders use a direct personal orientation it is called personal encountering. Followers experience personal perspectives characteristics of the leader through this orientation.

Leaders may directly orient officially with followers using formal attributes designated by the organization. When leaders use formal characteristics of the office in direct communication with followers it is called official encountering. Followers experience the leader holding an official perspective through this orientation.

Leaders may orient indirectly through structures and use organizational attributes. Leaders may elect to communicate indirectly with followers through rules, regulations, policies, programs, courses, ceremonies, or by

establishing organizational routines. When leaders communicate in this indirect manner it is called orientating through functional structures. Followers experience the organizational perspective through this orientation.

Thus, leaders create social control responses by communicating organizational expectations to followers through different orientations. They communicate directly, on a personal level or officially, and indirectly through organizational functional structures. Leaders influence follower responses using different motivational styles as well. Regardless of which leadership orientation is operative, leaders may use an authority, positive power, or negative power.

Three Leadership Styles

The authority and power concepts described in this section are based upon social control theory developed by Spady and Mitchell (1977 a,b) and Mitchell and Spady (1977). Leaders use authority and power mechanisms of social control in daily interactions with followers.

> Authority is the ability to manifest voluntary social control over followers because of inner character of a leader. Accordingly, those under authority act or conduct themselves in accordance to the will of those in authority and respond to the intrinsic, voluntary, and transforming character of authority.
>
> The concept of power is the ability to manifest voluntary or involuntary social control over followers because of external resources of a leader. Accordingly, those under power are coerced to behave in accordance to the will of those in power and respond to the segmented, immediate, and universal effects of power resources. (Gougeon, 1989)

People choose to follow leaders for many different reasons. Under authority, people follow the leader whose style is charismatic or naturally attractive, who has traditionally been followed, who demonstrates expertise in critical areas, or who holds a legal right to be followed. Thus the leader communicates a sense of charisma, tradition, expertise, or legality.

People may follow a leader in order to gain desired rewards (positive power) or to avoid undesirable punishments (negative power). Under power, people may follow a leader whose style incorporates the use of psychological, moral, technical, or contractual rewards and punishments. Under these circumstances, people follow the leader who projects a power motivational style.

Nine Leadership Dimensions

A leader may use authority or power motivational styles for each of the leadership orientations employed. Styles are considered independent of orientations and the resulting three by three matrix has nine cells, or leadership dimensions. Each dimension is dependent upon a different combination of motivational styles and orientations (See Figure 1.0).

In the first cell, followers experience the leader in an authentic manner at a personal level. Followers, swayed by the authoritative personal attributes of the leader,

Figure 1.0
Leadership As Social Control (LASC) Model
(Gougeon et al, 1990)
Leadership:
Social Control
Communication Patterns
of
School Principals

A Three-by-Three Matrix

MOTIVATION	ORIENTATIONS: PERSONAL	OFFICIAL	STRUCTURAL
AUTHORITY	CELL 1	CELL 2	CELL 3
POSITIVE POWER	CELL 4	CELL 6	CELL 8
NEGATIVE POWER	CELL 5	CELL 7	CELL 9

conduct themselves according to the wishes of the leader who communicates directly, one-on-one. Followers experience their leaders in an authentic manner as a person in cells two and three similarly. The difference between cell one and cell two is the leader orients with followers from the official position as leader in the latter and from a personal, more intimate orientation in the former. In cell three, the leader is experienced indirectly in an authentic manner through such structures as program development, rule and regulation announcements, and ceremony establishment.

In the fourth cell, followers experience the power of the leader giving rewards or administering punishments. Followers, in an attempt to gain rewards or avoid punishments, decide to conduct themselves according to the wishes of the leader who communicates directly, one-on-one. Followers experience their leaders similarly in cells five and six as having the potential to reward or to punish. The difference between cell four and cell five is the orientation taken by the leader with followers. Power styles are utilized in both leadership dimensions but in cell four the leader is experienced personally and in cell five the official perspectives of the leader are experienced by followers. In cell six followers experience rewards and punishments of the leader indirectly through programs, rules and regulations, or ceremonies.

Figure 2.0
Leader Actions Communicating Organizational Expectations.
Authority and Power Motivational Actions
By Points of Tension On The Expectation Continua
And By Leader Orientations.

LEADERSHIP ORIENTATION: DIRECT PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS

STYLE: AUTHORITY	EXPECTATION POINTS OF TENSION	STYLE: POWER (Positive/Negative)
ENCOUNTER -> INTIMACY	B-CH	ACCEPT/REJECT
EXECUTE -> ADEQUACY	D-CH	POTENCY/MANIPULATE
VALUE -> SELF WORTH	B-S	HONOR/SHAME
REGULATE -> SECURITY	D-S	AUTONOMY/COERCION

LEADERSHIP ORIENTATION: INDIRECT FUNCTIONAL ENCOUNTERS

STYLE: AUTHORITY	EXPECTATION POINTS OF TENSION	STYLE: POWER (Positive/Negative)
ACCULTURE -> ENGAGE	M-I	ADMIRE/SOC. ISOLATE
INSTRUCT -> LEARN	P-I	CHALLENGE/SELF ESTRANGE
CERTIFY -> QUALIFY	P-CO	HAIL SUCCESS/POWERLESS
SUPERVISE -> ADJUST	M-CO	MAKE DOMINANT/DISPLACE

LEADERSHIP ORIENTATION: DIRECT OFFICIAL ENCOUNTERS

STYLE: AUTHORITY	EXPECTATION POINTS OF TENSION	STYLE: POWER (Positive/Negative)
STIMULATE MOTIVATE	B-I	BELONGING/OSTRACIZE
EXPOSE ENABLE	CH-I	EXCITE/BORE
ILLUSTRATE EXPLAIN	CH-P	ASSIST/IMPOTENT
ASSESS EVALUATE	D-P	PAY/DEPRIVE
SELECT ASSIGN	D-CO	STABILIZE/PUNISH
SURVEY DISCIPLINE	S-CO	DELEGATE/EXCLUDE
GUIDE DIRECT	S-M	ESTEEM/DENOUNCE
COUNSEL SPONSOR	B-M	APPROVE/RIDICULE

LEGEND:
EXPECTATION POINTS OF TENSION

FOLLOWER WANTS			ORGANIZATION WANTS		
B	=	TO BOND	M	=	MAINTENANCE
D	=	TO DIFFERENTIATE	P	=	PRODUCTION
CH	=	CHANGE	I	=	MEMBER INVOLVEMENT
S	=	STABILITY	CO	=	MEMBER COMPLIANCE

Examples

Social control actions of leaders are described in Figure 1.0 by the leadership model. Figure 2.0 further illustrates leader social control actions associated with the model using independent variables of authority and power motivational styles, points of tension of followers, organizational expectation continua, and leader orientations.

The following example is analyzed using the leadership model. An experienced educator was recently hired by a School District as Principal of an elementary school. The new Principal was regarded as highly competent and professional. The Principal used a direct personal style with colleagues and early in the school year talked with her Superintendent outlining several out-of-district professional development activities she wanted to attend during the year. The Superintendent sidestepped the request, not committing himself to the Principal's plan, and said he would reply later. Subsequently, the Superintendent responded formally in a tersely written letter. He set "de facto" district policy in doing so.

The Principal was upset with the nature of the Superintendent's response.

Analyzing this example using Figure 2.0, consider the points of tension of the Principal and of the School District as represented by the Superintendent. The Principal expected high <u>differentiation</u> and <u>change</u> (D-CH). She also

wanted the Superintendent to use an authoritative style, to relate personally with her, to execute the request, so she could feel adequacy. Instead, she felt manipulated.

The Superintendent responded through structures and wrote a tersely worded letter to the Principal. He represented organizational expectations of high maintenance and high compliance (M-CO). The Superintendent acted toward the Principal using power resources of his office to make the Principal feel displaced. The Principal felt the negative power communicated in the letter and thought she did not have permission to discuss her leave request further.

The Superintendent communicated indirectly through a letter. What alternatives did he have? He could have given permission to the requests with which he genuinely felt comfortable. He could have communicated directly and evoked the authority style in an authentic manner without having to give permission to the entire year's travel requests. A direct authoritative personal encounter between the Principal and Superintendent might have resulted in the Principal feeling adequacy (D-CH). An indirect authoritative functional encounter might have resulted in the Principal experiencing voluntary adjustment (M-CO).

Had the Superintendent expected P-CO, he might have used an authoritative style, considered the Principal's accomplishments, and concluded that she had earned the right to travel away from the District (certified to travel) using

an authoritative style. The Principal would then feel qualified to travel.

In this episode, both the follower and the leader held expectations which were inconsistent (D-CH & M-CO). The Principal wanted to communicate using direct orientation. The Superintendent wanted to communicate officially. Using a direct official encounter as illustrated in Figure 2.0, the Principal would have been satisfied if leader actions were consistent with points of tension CH-P. Here, the Principal would expect more change than stability and the Superintendent would expect the organization to be productive rather than to be maintained. If the request for out-of-district professional travel were considered to be consistent with the organizational need of productivity and the follower's need of change, the Superintendent could have explained his point of view and granted permission to the Principal to travel on those trips which he felt would further the organization's needs in a genuine manner.

Since the expectations of the Superintendent and the Principal were inconsistent, the Superintendent could have elected to act using direct authoritative or power official encounters for D-CO points of tension. In this scenario, the Principal would expect to differentiate (D) rather than belong with others, and the Superintendent would expect compliance (CO) of the Principal rather than high spirited involvement. In this case, the Superintendent could have assigned the Principal special tasks on specific approved

trips. The approval of trips would enable the Principal to differentiate from others while the assignments would require compliance of the Principal to the School District.

In either scenario, authoritative style and direct orientation could have been used and the expectations of the Principal might have aligned with those of the School District. In fact, however, the Principal felt manipulated by the orientation the Superintendent used and punished by the use of the power style.

In another example of communication of organizational expectations between the same actors, the Principal assumed the responsibilities of her new position in the midst of a crisis and demonstrated extraordinary leadership to manage the crisis on behalf of the District. The Superintendent publicly gave praise to the work of the new Principal at a school board meeting.

Analyzing this example the Superintendent used a power style and an indirect functional orientation. The expectations of the organization as represented by the Superintendent were high maintenance and high compliance (M-CO) and expectations of the Principal were high differentiating and high change (D-CH). The action of the Superintendent was making dominant a new member of the organization. The Principal felt rewarded by this announcement and her response was to be more compliant for a short time.

LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

The instrument developed to measure leader self rated conduct is briefly described in this section. In addition, refinements made to the instrument which resulted from reliability and validity concerns are listed.

The Instrument

The instrument had three forms, Forms A, B, and C. Each Form was developed to measure the nine dimensions of leadership action and conduct. The Leadership As Social Control (LASC) instrument used a cross sectional design in that data are collected at one point in time to describe a larger population at that time. In designing the LASC instrument it was assumed the basic unit of analysis would be the school principal, therefore the items which measured the six leadership dimensions queried only principal actions. The instrument gathered self descriptive data which were integral to the understanding of leadership phenomena. The data gathering process also involved external ratings by direct supervisors of each principal respondent which provided a comparative frame of reference to the self descriptive principal responses. In addition, the instrument used Likert-like scales and produced equally-appearing interval data which supported the argument to use more powerful statistical correlational analytical procedures.

The instrument contained 56 leadership items, six tension point items, one overall leadership effectiveness rating item, and 16 biographical and contextual items. There

were three Likert-like response scales, one reflected a normative judgment, the second reflected a descriptive judgment, and the third reflected an evaluative judgment of each leadership item.

Care was used to reduce threats to validity and reliability during the development of the instrument also.

Validity Considerations

The instrument was designed to meet criteria for correlational statistical procedures and designed to meet statistical conclusion validity issues. Arguments were made supporting claims of randomization of samples, interval data, and normal distribution of data (Gougeon, 1989). Construct validity and external validity issues were also argued. Actions taken to reduce threats to construct validity were outlined. Finally, external validity was argued on the basis that using three samples from the population of principals provided greater confidence in generalizing findings to the target population (Gougeon, 1989).

Reliability Considerations

Whereas a validity argument considers whether an instrument measures what it was intended to measure, a reliability argument considers the frequency an instrument measures what it was intended to measure. In other words, reliability arguments consider the accuracy of an instrument. The level of accuracy was heightened refining the instrument based on results of split half procedures,

factor analysis procedures, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient procedures, and comparative data from supervisors of the respondents.

The split half procedures identified several leadership dimension items which were subsequently eliminated. In conjunction with the factor analysis results, several leadership dimension items were sensitive to leadership bias rather than insensitive to the leadership dimension which they were designed to measure. The reliability coefficient of one leadership dimension was improved by increasing the number of items using Cronbach's Alpha procedure. The comparative data from supervisors of respondents identified a bias in respondent reporting patterns. Instrument items found to be unreliable were isolated from further calculations (Gougeon, 1989).

In summary, it was concluded that the instrument measured the concepts it was designed to measure with appropriate level of accuracy.

LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT

Although the Leadership as Social Control (LASC) model may be applied across any social situation, the LASC instrument may not. Items in the instrument must reflect specific contextual situations in which leaders and followers find themselves. For the purposes of this study, school systems were selected as the context. The sample was deliberately narrowed to gain the maximum consistency among organizational contextual factors. Consequently, principals

of public high schools with grade configurations 9 through 12 in the State of Washington were selected as leaders. Thus, followers were the certified grade 9 through 12 teachers of the schools.

The Samples

Based on records from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction in Washington State, one hundred and ninety-four principals met the criteria set for the sample. Nineteen were female and 175 were male. A total of 114 were included in the study, 11 females and 103 males. Fifty-five principals completed Form A of the instrument, 29 completed Form B, and 30 completed Form C.

Specific Results

Results of the study were categorized by communication style of authority and power, and by communication orientation of personal, official, and structural encounters. Female principals differed significantly from male principals in their preference to use authority communication styles. Principals who entered administration relatively late in their careers, having taught 19 or more years in the classroom, differed from principals who entered administration earlier in their careers by their preference to use both reward and punishment power communication styles. Principals who entered administration earlier in their careers avoided the use of negative power styles while principals who entered later in their careers did not. Younger principals, principals with less administrative

experience, and principals of smaller schools differed from older principals, principals with more administrative experience, and principals of larger schools by their preference to use authoritative styles. The older principals, principals with more administrative experience, and principals of larger schools preferred to use power communication styles.

Principals of schools with very large student enrollments differed from principals with fewer students enrolled by their preference to orient with teachers directly and personally. Principals of schools with large student enrollments and principals who entered administration after teaching careers of 19 or more years differed from other principals by their preference to orient with teachers directly and officially. Principals who entered administration early having fewer than six years of teacher experience differed from all other principals in their preference to orient with teachers indirectly using functional structures.

General Results

Overall, principals first preferred to communicate with teachers using positive power styles giving rewards and second preferred to use authoritative styles. They preferred to orient themselves with teachers directly and personally. The least preferred style was negative power, that of levying punishment to teachers, and the least preferred orientation was the use of indirect functional structures.

IMPLICATIONS

The above results are based upon pilot samples of respondents found to be representative of the State of Washington and National populations of high school principals (Gougeon, 1989). The pilot samples were selected primarily to norm the instrument, not describe the population. Consequently this section will not dwell upon the implications of leader characteristics but will be devoted to implications of research and instrument design.

Social control theory involves leader and follower interactions with respect to personally held and organizational expectations. Since the leadership as social control theory is comprehensive, data gathering must be comprehensive as well. How followers experience the leader is critical to the theory and will be included in the next stage of analysis. As well, situations in which interactions take place are important. To reflect leader, follower, and situational variables, several methods of gathering data are recommended. It is appropriate that a comprehensive data gathering strategy is necessary to reflect the comprehensive nature of the theory.

It is argued here that the use of attitude questionnaires, to measure follower experiences of the leader and self described leader experiences, is applicable in combination with the use of several carefully selected sites for qualitative observational techniques. Qualitative phenomenological research typically limits the number of

subjects according to available resources at hand. It is rare to have enough resources to establish more than a few observational sites. The number of sites can be substantially increased without substantial increases in resources if a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods are used.

Increasing the range of sites selected for observation may provide greater insight into the relationship between leader action variables and situational variables. Gathering data from many schools with different grade ranges may provide greater insight how organizational variables effect leadership as social control. The use of K-5, 6-9, and 10-12 grade range schools will provide access to more female principal respondents, thereby reducing threats to reliability with respect to female/male differences.

The LASC (self) instrument in this study collected self-descriptive data of leaders in high schools. In order to understand the social control phenomenon in leadership situations, data of follower experiences of the leader is central. Consequently a Follower In Social Control (other) instrument was developed and will be used in conjunction with a refined and improved LASC instrument. In addition, qualitative observational data will be gathered at some sites to provide greater insight into the findings from the quantitative data gathered by the LASC and FISC instruments.

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